

Department of Human Services

Articles in Today's Clips Tuesday, August 28, 2007

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Police investigate alleged abuse of infant

POLICE BLOTTER

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Tuesday, August 28, 2007

By James L. Smith

jmsmith@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6365

FLINT - A 32-year-old mother and her boyfriend, 43, could face charges in the alleged sexual assault of the woman's 9-year-old daughter.

Flint police Sgt. Ken Engel said witnesses reported the crime after seeing the child in bed and undressed with the man at a home on Oklahoma Avenue near Olive Avenue. The assaults are believed to have occurred on several occasions. The mother likely will face charges for failing to protect her child, Engel said.

No arrests have been made yet.

- James L. Smith

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Safe environmental awareness training offered in U.P.

MARQUETTE — As in years past, the Catholic Diocese of Marquette is requiring new clergy, as well as diocesan, parish and Catholic school employees and volunteers who have regular contact with children or youth, or are in a position to observe those who do, to attend an awareness session for the prevention of child sexual abuse.

The free session, called Protecting God's Children for Adults, is being offered at various sites and on different dates throughout the Upper Peninsula from September to January 2008. Anyone who plans to work or volunteer with children or youth in the coming year and has not yet taken the training must take it during this time period.

The nine Catholic schools in the diocese will host the workshops. Participants will learn the signs of child sexual abuse, the methods and means by which offenders commit abuse and five easy steps people can take to prevent that abuse. Although the session is intended for those who work and volunteer in Catholic schools and parishes, anyone in the local community is welcome to attend.

The awareness sessions for the local area are scheduled for:

Thursday, Sept. 27, at 6 p.m. at Holy Name School in Escanaba

Thursday, Jan. 24, 2008, at 6:30 p.m. at St. Francis de Sales School in Manistique

People are asked to register for the awareness session via the Internet. Log on to **www.virtusonline.org**, click on the yellow Registration link on the left hand side of the page and follow the instructions for registering for a Protecting God's Children awareness session. Those who do not have access to a computer are asked to contact their local parish or school safe environment coordinator.

In addition to participating in the three-hour workshop and completing online training, volunteers and employees must complete an authorization form for a criminal history background check.

This awareness session for employees and volunteers is part of the diocese's safe environment program, which has two other components: a program for children, which is mandatory, and another for parents and guardians, which parishes are strongly encouraged but not required to offer.

These measures to help prevent the sexual abuse of children and youth are required by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People that was adopted in 2002.

[Print Page](#)

Speaking for those who are unable to speak for themselves

Monday, August 27, 2007 10:25 AM EDT

Wednesday, Aug. 15, 2007

One group of volunteers which performs a very needed task is the Cass County CASAs.

Court-Appointed Special Advocates speak for children, some of whom have been abused and neglected by those who should be the ones protecting them.

Cass County CASA is again hosting cookouts as one of the primary fund-raising events this year.

The third annual CASA cookouts will take place this weekend at locations at Birch Lake on Aug. 17, at Magician Lake on Aug. 18 and at Diamond Lake on Aug. 19.

Grill masters will be plying their craft and, new this year, live music will be provided by Gene Halton.

Attendees will have an opportunity to talk to CASA volunteers and board members about the Cass County CASA program and what their donations can do to help.

Cass County CASA was started by Judge Susan Dobrich of Cass Family Court in 1995.

Dobrich realized that children who had been removed from their homes needed a supportive adult in their lives and an advocate in court.

Many children have come to the attention of the Department of Human Services and the court through concerned teachers, school personnel and law enforcement.

There are more than 150 children in Cass County who are in foster care due to abuse and neglect in their own homes.

CASA volunteers spend time visiting with the child or the children in a family, investigating compliance of parents and service providers to determine whether the orders of the Family Court are being followed and report to the court on a regular basis.

A CASA volunteer is the voice of a child in court.

It is the goal of CASA volunteers to assist the court in finding a permanent, safe and secure family for their CASA child whether that is the return of the child to their original family or adoption.

Our volunteers are an amazing force for good, and we need more of them. Our vision is that every child who needs a volunteer will have one. With your help, CASA can reach that goal here in Cass County.

If you are interested in attending one of these cookouts and have not received an invitation, please contact Lisa Schmidt at (269) 445-4431.

You will have an opportunity to hear about this worthy organization and have some fun at the same time.

If you are unable to attend, your donation will still be appreciated.

Posted: 8-28-2007

Cybercrime? 4 area youths victims in alleged sexually abusive activity; Scottville man charged

JOE BOOMGAARD - DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

A 29-year-old Scottville man is alleged to have used a computer to communicate with four area youths, whom he persuaded or knowingly allowed to engage in sexually abusive activity. He is also accused of producing child sexually abusive material, according to the Mason County Sheriff's Office.

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He remains in Mason County Jail today after he was arrested Monday on a six-count felony warrant. He was expected to be arraigned today in 79th District Court. He's charged with four counts of child sexually abusive activity, one count of communicating with a computer or the Internet to commit a crime, and one count of possession of child sexually abusive material.

According to Undersheriff Tom Trenner, the man had been interviewed as part of a month-long investigation and was taken into custody late Monday afternoon. All four victims involved in the incident were also interviewed by detectives.

"The detectives have been working on it for a long time," Trenner said. "It took a lot of computer forensics to work on the case."

Trenner refused to get into the specifics of the case until the man was arraigned, but said the man is alleged to have photographed the youths, whom he knew were under the age of 17.

The charge of child sexually abusive activity involves a person who coerces or knowingly allows a child to engage in a sexually abusive activity for the purpose of producing any sexually abusive material, a person who arranges for or produces — or who attempts to arrange for or produce — any sexually abusive activity or material.

According to the law, the person knows, has reason to know or should reasonably be expected to know that the child is a minor or that the sexually abusive material includes a child, that the depiction constituting the sexually abusive material appears to include a child, or that person has not taken reasonable precautions to determine the age of the child. The charge is punishable by not more than 20 years in prison or a fine of not more than \$100,000.

SurfCon

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Access to the requested web page has been blocked by

The charge of computers-Internet-communication with another person to commit a crime carries a penalty of up to 20 years in prison and a possible fine of up to \$20,000. A charge of possession of child sexually abusive material carries a maximum penalty of four years in prison and a possible fine of up to \$10,000.

Sheriff's detectives are continuing to investigate the incident.

Crimes involving computers throw a whole new twist into criminal investigations, Trenner said.

"They're very time-consuming," he said. "We sent detectives through computer crime classes and forensics (for these types of cases)."

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843-1122, ext. 309

Post a Comment

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State suspends Hazel Park day care license

August 28, 2007

By JACK KRESNAK

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

The children's day care home license of a Hazel Park woman has been summarily suspended because of unspecified violations of the state's Child Care Organizations Act, the Michigan Department of Human Services announced Tuesday.

The day care home operated by Rachel Zonsius in the 1400 block of East Elza had been licensed since Feb. 6, 2007, the DHS said.

Advertisement

The home was licensed to provide day care for up to six children. An investigation by the DHS' Office of Children and Adult Licensing of a complaint received on Aug. 23 prompted the summary suspension, the DHS said.

Zonsius could not be reached for comment.

The suspension order requires Zonsius to inform all parents of the children in her care that her license has been suspended and she can no longer provide day care.

For more information, go to www.michigan.gov/dhs.

Contact Jack Kresnak at 313-223-4544 or jkresnak@freepress.com

Find this article at:

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070828/NEWS03/70828015/0/CFP03>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

Blaze hits foster care home

Residents were out when the morning fire gutted building

By MIKE FORNES

Tribune Staff Writer

KOEHLER TOWNSHIP - Residents of the Pigeon Bay Adult Foster Care facility took the best outings of their lives Monday.

Fire swept through the structure while three residents of the home at 1102 E. Mullett Lake Road were being transported to the Beacon Center and another was on the way to Gaylord with the facility's director.

Tuscarora Township Fire Chief Dave Carpenter thinks that no one was home at the time of the blaze, just before 10 a.m.

"We think everybody was out, and it appears that was very fortunate," Carpenter said as firemen soaked smoldering timbers. "It was going pretty good when we got here. I figure our response time was about seven minutes from getting the call."

The original 911 call came from a builder working nearby who said he could not get a cell phone signal.

"I was worried that somebody was in there," said Gerald Wolfgram. "I saw smoke from down the road near Parrott's Pointe and when I drove up I didn't see any other cars, but I wasn't sure. I yelled eight or nine times, but got no answer. I made it to just inside the front door and after that, it was 'good-bye Charlie,' it was just too hot."

Wolfgram said he finally made contact with his office, Indian River Custom Log Homes, and they called 911.

"The front door was closed and not locked," Wolfgram said. "I was just glad nobody was in there."

Carpenter said that responding fire departments included companies from Indian River, East Mullett Lake and Topinabee. The structure is a total loss.

BOB HERBERT

Holding Kids Hostage

The governors of New York and New Jersey were upset and not trying to hide it.

"We had zero forewarning," said New Jersey's Jon Corzine. "It was sprung at 7:30 on a Friday night in the middle of August, the time when it would draw the least fire."

He was talking about the Bush administration's latest effort to thwart the expansion of the popular Children's Health Insurance Program. Governors in several states are trying to include more youngsters from the lower rungs of the middle class and have vowed to fight the president on this issue.

Acting during a Congressional recess, and making a distinct effort to stay beneath the radar of the news media, the administration enacted insidious new rules that make it much harder for states to bring additional children under the umbrella of the program, known colloquially as CHIP.

The program is popular because it works. It's cost effective and there is wide bipartisan support for its expansion. But President Bush, locked in an ideological straitjacket, is adamant in his opposition.

In addition to the new rules drastically curtailing the ability of governors to expand local coverage by obtaining waivers from the federal government, the president has threatened a veto of Congressional efforts to fund a more robust version of the overall program.

"It's stunning," said New York's Gov. Eliot Spitzer. "He says he's going to

veto health care for kids because it's too expensive at the same time that these continuing resolutions for the war, where we don't even know what the cost is, are going through unabated. This is insanity.

"Everybody agrees this is the right thing to do except the Bush administration."

Health coverage for poor children is provided by Medicaid. CHIP was origi-

Governors fight Bush on health insurance.

nally designed to cover the children of the working poor. That has worked well, but there are still huge numbers of families who need help.

"The reality," said Governor Spitzer, "is that there is an enormous proportion of American society above the poverty level but in the lower middle class that simply can't afford health coverage."

Wherever there are large numbers of families without coverage, you will find children who are suffering needlessly and, in extreme cases, dying. They don't get the preventive care or the attention to chronic illness that they should.

"That has not only an immediate effect on their development," said Mr. Spitzer, "but a long-term cost to society that is incalculable."

Several states, including New York and New Jersey, have used federal waivers to raise the family income ceiling for eligibility to participate in CHIP. New Jersey, for example, offers coverage to the children of families with incomes as high as 350 percent of the official poverty rate for a family of four, which is \$20,650 a year. New York has an upper limit of 250 percent of the poverty rate and is trying to raise it to 400 percent.

State officials said the onerous new rules would make it all but impossible to offer coverage beyond 250 percent of the poverty level.

Administration officials have argued that the CHIP program should adhere closely to its original intent of limiting coverage to families only slightly above the official poverty line. They said there is a danger that families with higher incomes would begin substituting CHIP for private insurance coverage.

The reality is that under the administration's approach enormous numbers of children in families without a lot of money will be left with no coverage at all, private or otherwise. The expansion of CHIP is the most efficient, cost-effective way of reaching those youngsters.

Denying CHIP to such families forces them to seek out hospital emergency rooms when medical treatment can no longer be postponed. "I see it every day," said Governor Corzine. "If you're uninsured, particularly with children, if you don't have a place to go, that's where people show up."

What's happening is cruel. Children who should be eligible for CHIP are being held hostage to policies driven by a desire to protect the big insurance companies and an ideology that views CHIP, correctly, as yet another important step on the road to universal health care.

Ronald Reagan, one of the tribunes in the fight against Medicare and Medicaid back in the '60s, pumped up the warnings against "socialized medicine" by saying that if Medicare becomes a reality "you and I are going to spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it once was like in America when men were free."

I wonder what crazy things the ideologues think would happen if CHIP is expanded to cover the children who have no health insurance today. □

THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

LETTERS

Tuesday, August 28, 2007

Single-payer insurance is a threat to freedom

Regarding single-payer health insurance, I'm amazed people voluntarily want to give up control over their bodies to politicians and bureaucrats. Why cede control to a single, monolithic insurance entity which only responds to lobbying and vote buying? If you are dissatisfied with the single-payer system, what are you supposed to do? Switch countries? Hope "your" people get elected? HMOs may be bad, but a government HMO would be worse. The smarter choice is to go in the opposite direction, with more payers, not fewer. Most people should pay for simple things out of pocket and use privately purchased insurance for big and unexpected expenses. You, not your employer or government, choose the insurance that best fits your family. Portability is a nonissue because you own your policy. Private health insurance is a mess right now because of years of government meddling, often at the behest of the insurance industry itself. Eliminate cross-state purchasing restrictions and government mandates, and increased competition will bring new innovation.

Those who think single-payer would be a good thing are living in a fool's paradise. Medicare, a smaller scale single-payer system, is facing financial difficulties. Other countries are recognizing that their systems also have problems. Finally, single-payer would be a huge threat to individual freedom. When taxpayers pay your health insurance, taxpayers own your body. Nanny state rules to "promote" good health and control costs are inevitable. Controversial procedures won't be covered. This is not the kind of system that a free country should have.

James W. Howe, Ann Arbor

Americans already face long waits for care

James C. Mitchiner's Aug. 19 Other Voices column, "Single-payer coverage already works in U.S." is a good start to the health care debate. In addendum, I would like to note that though critics of universal health care like to point to long wait times in Canada for hospital service, how much shorter are wait times for Americans?

I injured my ankle two weeks ago and, due to my coverage with M-Care, I had it X-rayed to check for breaks the next day. However, because it was not "an emergency," it took longer for the radiologist to review the X-ray, and though it wasn't broken, my physician referred me to see a specialist due to an irregularity on the film. I now have an appointment with a specialist scheduled for the end of next week.

It's taking three weeks for me to see a specialist and I could be doing irreparable damage to my ankle in the meantime.

One issue that keeps universal health care off the table is governmental cost. The U.S. government already spends more on health care than Canada's government does, so won't we have to raise taxes? However, raising taxes will not necessarily lower a family's net income. Currently, health care premiums from private providers are skyrocketing, largely due to increasing costs incurred from emergency treatment for the uninsured.

In consequence, employers are dropping health coverage, forcing more people into the uninsured bracket and snowballing the problem. If we had universal health care, rising costs should return to manageable levels.

Dale A. White, Ann Arbor



KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Ground broken for new juvenile home

Tuesday, August 28, 2007

cricks@kalamazoogazette.com 388-8557

Kalamazoo County officials broke ground this morning for the construction of a new 64-bed Kalamazoo County Juvenile Home, though heavy construction won't start until fall. Voters last August approved \$28.3 million in bonds to fund a new juvenile facility at 1424 Gull Road. It will be built adjacent to the current juvenile home.

What's happened: Some alternative parking for juvenile home employees has been provided, but more is on the way. Earth work has been done at the site. Communication lines between the current juvenile home and nearby family court building have been moved, said Kristin Goodchild, project coordinator for CSM Group. County officials have acquired an acre of property east of the current juvenile home and hope to purchase two other small parcels. Two homes on Gull Road have been removed and another structure on Humphrey Street will soon be demolished, said Thom Canny, the county's corporate counsel.

What will happen: On Friday, county officials will put out a bid package for \$15 million -- the largest chunk of construction associated with the project. Bonds for the juvenile home will be issued by the end of October. Most of the construction will start Oct. 15 and continue until January 2, 2009, Canny said.

Move in: Once construction is complete, the old juvenile home will be demolished. Officials expect the move into the new juvenile home to occur in the first quarter of 2009, Canny said.

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LEONARD PITTS JR.

Words to live by: Keep your eyes on the prize

August 28, 2007

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.

KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS

I wanted to use your name, but the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice asked me not to.

Maybe you'll recognize yourself from this description. You are 16. You are confined to a juvenile detention center. You were convicted of public disorderly conduct and "assault and battery of a high and aggravated nature." And Stacey Haynes has taken a special interest in you.

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She's a federal prosecutor who told me about you when I visited Columbia last month to give a speech. Actually, she asked me to autograph a copy of my book, "Becoming Dad," for you. She said she made a deal to give it to you if you went 30 days without a disciplinary write-up.

I'm used to signing books that are given as gifts, maybe a few that end up as doorstops. This was the first time I'd ever been asked to sign a book as an incentive. But she told me you are that rarity, a reader. I hear you might even want to be a writer yourself someday.

I was really pulling for you to win it. But after a few weeks of good behavior, you committed an infraction. I was disappointed when Stacey told me that. Then she told me what the infraction was.

Am I to understand that you got in trouble for swatting a pregnant guard on the backside with a towel? That is the dumbest thing I've ever heard.

No, I'm not writing this to dog you. But it occurs to me that what you did epitomizes one of the major reasons you and a million other young men so often wind up locked in cells and coffins. Yes, there's poverty, and there's father absence and there's lack of education, and these things play crucial roles.

But there's also this: Apparently no one ever taught you to keep your eyes on the prize.

I'm going to tell you what I used to tell my sons: Never satisfy a short-term impulse at the expense of a long-term goal. Never do what feels good in the moment if it's going to cost you something that matters a whole lot more in the end. The trade is never worth it.

You want to be a writer; you wanted that book. But you'd endanger that for the momentary satisfaction of irritating a guard? Does that make any sense? I'll bet you the inability to think long term is found in 90% of the young men in that detention center. They wanted to make their mothers proud, they wanted to prove something to somebody, they wanted to fulfill this dream or that ... and they threw it away for something momentary, fleeting and, ultimately, worthless.

You're lucky. I hear Stacey eventually wound up giving you the book anyway. I hope you enjoy it. And I hope you understand that life doesn't always give second chances.

I asked her why she had taken a special interest in you. She told me about visiting your unit as a speaker. "He asked intelligent questions and seemed to have a lot of potential hidden behind his tough exterior. I see a lot of defendants in the federal system who, when you talk to them one-on-one, are just guys who made one bad decision after another. Most may have made different choices if they had someone who expressed an interest in them and showed them another way."

She wanted to be that person for you, to help steer you onto another track before you graduate to federal crimes. Stacey Haynes has made an investment in you. And I guess, from a distance, I have, too.

When people make investments, they are looking for a return, a profit. In your case, that profit would be that you leave that place and never look back, that you build a life that makes you a credit to your community as opposed to one of its deficits.

You can do that. Step one is to always remember: Eyes on the prize.

LEONARD PITTS JR. is a columnist for the *Miami Herald*, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla. 33132. Write to him at lpitts@miamiherald.com.

Find this article at:

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2007708280329>

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Broncos RB Travis Henry reportedly fathered nine children in four states

August 27, 2007

FREE PRESS NEWS SERVICES

Broncos running back Travis Henry been ordered to provide \$3,000 a month for the Lithonia, Ga., boy he fathered out of wedlock three years ago, a DeKalb Superior Court Judge ordered, according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

The paper reported Henry, 28, has fathered nine children by nine women in at least four Southern states and has been ordered by various judges to provide child support for seven of them, according to court records.

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The Broncos signed Henry to a five-year, \$22.5-million contract in March with \$12 million in guaranteed bonuses.

"People can judge me all they want," Henry told the Denver Post. "But only God can judge me.

"A lot of stuff that's been put out there isn't true, but I'm not going to get into that right now," Henry said. "The important thing is I want to take care of my kids really and truly. It's all good."

According to court records, the judge wrote that Henry displayed "bad judgment in his spending habits," dropping \$100,000 for a car and \$146,000 for jewelry. Henry fell behind on support payments for one child. Threatened with jail, he borrowed \$9,800 from his former team, the Tennessee Titans, to pay the bill, according to court records.

Henry's lawyer, Shiel Edlin, told the Atlanta paper, Henry wants to be a good parent. "I know these are a lot of kids, and there might be some questions about it, but he's a really committed father."

Read the full [Atlanta paper article](#).

Find this article at:

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070827/SPORTS11/70827008/1038/ENT03&&imw=Y>

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Taking off the blinders

Tuesday, August 28, 2007

No community is immune to domestic violence. It's a crime that doesn't discriminate. It can happen to anyone, regardless of age, race, religion, gender or education background. Leontyne "Tina" Partee-Elder is the latest victims in this community. Her estranged husband was charged with stabbing her to death last week.

Society must change the way it looks at domestic violence in order to deal with the problem more successfully. Instead of averting our eyes and closing our ears, we must be willing to get involved and act in ways that protect and support those in need. That includes reporting domestic violence and encouraging victims to speak up and seek the help they need to break free of abusive relationships.

Neighbors heard Ms. Partee-Elder screaming during the attack in her Grand Rapids home but didn't call police. It's that kind of hand's off response that must change.

The shame associated with domestic violence on the part of victims needs to end, too. People suffering abuse can't be embarrassed to ask for help -- for their sake and that of their children. Studies show that children exposed to violence are more likely to commit or suffer violence when they become adults. Breaking that cycle is important.

Over the last two decades, people in the criminal justice system have come to view brutality in personal relationships as a serious matter, not just a problem to be solved outside of courtrooms by consenting adults. But the reality is that the courts and cops can only do so much to stop an episode of violence. Court restraining orders won't stop a determined assailant. It's important for women to protect themselves with support from family, friends, even casual acquaintances.

The public needs to adopt the same attitude as law enforcement officials. When people see or hear abusive situations they shouldn't turn a blind eye to avoid getting involved in other people's lives. Just as the public has grown more willing to call authorities to report suspected child abusers, the same must happen with domestic disputes. Lives could depend on it.

The Grand Rapids area has seen its share of domestic violence tragedies. In addition to Ms. Partee-Elder, a 41-year-old lawyer, who had obtained a restraining order against her husband; Cristi Curtis, Julie Abbott, Kristi Vazquez and Mimi Bernard are among local women killed in recent years by their estranged or ex-husbands or boyfriends.

- Ms. Curtis, 29, a Byron Center High School teacher and Aquinas College Volleyball coach, was shot in July by her estranged boyfriend, who then killed himself.
- Ms. Abbott, 40, was killed in 2004 at her Gaines Township home by her estranged husband. He confessed to killing her with a hatchet and a knife as she left home to go to work.
- Ms. Vazquez, 34, of Wyoming was shot to death in 2004 by her ex-husband, who then turned the gun on himself.
- Ms. Bernard, 48, was stabbed to death by her ex-husband in her Cascade Township home in 2003.

While men and women both are victims of domestic violence, women are victimized more often. It will take a community effort to help avert more of these senseless tragedies.



Suspect told dad what he did

Tuesday, August 28, 2007

By Danielle Quisenberry

dquisenberry@citpat.com -- 768-4929

Joseph Catalano said his son arrived angry early Monday at his house in Columbia Township.

"He was livid. He was all upset and everything," Catalano said. "He told me what he did. ! He came to me because I am his dad."

Catalano's son, Timothy Catalano, 45, of Westland, was arrested after 2:30 a.m. Monday at his father's home near Lake Columbia, police said, after he shot his girlfriend, Tammy Susalla, in the back of head about 1 a.m. in Westland.

The Jackson County Sheriff's Office said Monday that the two had been married, but Westland police said Tuesday that was not the case. Joseph Catalano, who called the Jackson County Sheriff's Office to report what his son had told him, said the couple had lived together for about 20 years.

Catalano was to be arraigned this afternoon in Wayne County on charges that have yet to be determined, said Westland police Lt. Daniel Karrick.

Susalla was alive, but on life support as of Monday afternoon at the University of Michigan Medical Center in Ann Arbor, Karrick said. "She is not expected to recover," Karrick said.

What charges Catalano faces depend on her condition, Karrick said.

Karrick said Susalla was found in a bedroom at the home she shared with Catalano in Westland.

He said at the time there was a "domestic situation."

"I believe they were in the process of separating," he said.

Joseph Catalano said his son and Susalla, who have a 19-year-old daughter, have not been getting along.

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ClickOnDetroit.com

Man Accused Of Shooting Girlfriend

POSTED: 6:14 pm EDT August 27, 2007

UPDATED: 6:51 pm EDT August 27, 2007

A Westland man was being held in connection with the Monday morning shooting of his long-time girlfriend.

Police said 44-year-old Tammy Susalla was shot in the head while she slept in the couple's home. Susalla's daughter was also in the house and called police after hearing the gunshot and a scream.

Police said the boyfriend, identified as Timothy Catalano, allegedly put a pillow over Susalla's head in an attempt to cover up the attack.

Susalla was flown by helicopter to the University Of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor, where she was placed on life-support.

"She was a loving, caring person," said Trisha Borowski, a long-time family friend. "She treated him like gold for 23 years."

Friends said Catalano and Susalla were former high school sweethearts but that the couple had a history of domestic violence.

Catalano was taken into police custody. No charges have been filed.

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Video: Woman Shot In Head



THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Training has power to transform lives

Monday, August 27, 2007

When community leaders conceived the idea for what became the Robert J. Delonis Center, they knew it needed to be more than just a homeless shelter. Although important, providing shelter was a short-term fix to the often chronic problem of homelessness.

The shelter also needed ways to help lift people out of the cycle that brought them there. A training program run by the local nonprofit Food Gatherers is a great example of doing just that - giving people the opportunity to change their lives.

The program is a six-week, 120-hour culinary and food safety course, taught from the shelter's community kitchen, which Food Gatherers also runs. Most students are between 17 and 21 years old, referred to the program by groups like the shelter, Ozone House, Avalon Housing or the state Department of Human Services. Not all are homeless, but they all are struggling to find their way.

Almost 40 people have graduated since the program began in 2004, including 14 people who just finished the course last week. Of that total, between 80-90 percent are either employed or in school - the program's definition of success.

It's not just about learning to cook, says Missy Orge, director of Food Gatherers' outreach and training. The goal is to provide good role models and teach broader skills, including finding and keeping a job.

So while graduates get references and help in locating openings at places like Zingerman's and People's Food Co-op, the students are responsible for taking the initiative to get a job or apply for school. Some do both - like 19-year-old Leighia Murphy, a recent graduate who hopes to start the culinary arts program at Washtenaw Community College next year. She has a job as salad chef at the Ann Arbor City Women's Club, thanks to her training.

These young people face many difficulties in their lives, Orge says. After completing the training program, "their confidence grows," she says. "They take more challenges and they embrace the idea of learning more."

Perhaps the greatest benefit this program offers is hope - that a better life is within reach. And that's a lesson that lasts far beyond the end of class.

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Muskegon Chronicle

County projects a stable budget in unstable times

Monday, August 27, 2007

By Steve Gunn

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Beth Dick, Muskegon County's budget manager, says trying to guide the county's finances through turbulent economic times is like "a roller coaster ride of uncertainty."

While she tells county commissioners that the fiscal 2008 budget plan calls for a balanced general fund with no major cuts in programs or jobs, she also says things could change quickly.

And that will surely happen if state government, grappling with another budget crisis, makes cuts or changes that cost county governments hundreds of thousands of dollars.

But for now, Dick is operating on the assumption that the state won't ruin an otherwise optimistic fiscal forecast.

The new budget calls for general fund revenues and expenditures balancing at \$47,641,567. That represents a 2.4 percent increase in revenues and expenditures over fiscal 2007, when the general fund is expected to balance at \$46,512,068.

The general fund includes most basic county services, like police protection, the courts and administration. The majority of its revenue comes from local property tax revenues and service fees.

The overall 2008 budget, which includes many departments and programs which largely are funded by outside sources like the state and federal governments, calls for total revenues of \$246,840,394 and expenditures of \$255,573,963. The shortfall is expected to be covered by existing fund balances.

The 2007 fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30, has been largely status quo, with no major new programs or accomplishments for the county, but no financial catastrophes, either. The 2008 fiscal year is expected to mirror 2007, if everything goes according to plan.

The 2007 fiscal year brought several pleasant financial surprises for the general fund.

For instance, overall costs for the Child Care Fund, which includes the county's contribution toward foster care, are now expected to be \$390,000 lower than anticipated when the fiscal year ends. That's because of a "significant decrease" in the placement of foster children and adults, county officials said.

Similarly, employee wages are expected to be \$284,000 less than expected, due to a hiring freeze imposed by county commissioners last winter.

Coming in higher than expected are property tax revenues (\$186,000), interest earnings (\$229,000), state prisoner reimbursements (\$195,000), district court revenue (\$174,000) and register of deeds revenue (\$125,000).

Some costs have been higher than expected in fiscal 2007, including medical insurance (\$170,000), general liability insurance (\$63,000), building maintenance (\$190,000), legal fees (\$92,000), the general fund subsidy to the Muskegon County Airport (\$150,000) and the general fund subsidy to the Brookhaven Medical Care Facility (\$636,000).

Unexpected income is expected to outpace unexpected spending by about \$200,000 when the fiscal year ends, and the extra money could be transferred to the public improvement fund, and might eventually be

put toward the possible construction of a new county jail and juvenile detention facility.

Some of last year's positive trends, like increased property tax revenues, are expected to continue this year, Dick said. The county is also expecting the delinquent tax revolving fund to generate nearly \$1 million more than it did in fiscal 2007, due primarily to the new property tax collection schedule.

On the negative side, the cost of the child care fund is expected to increase by \$350,000, the general fund contribution to the county's family court is expected to increase by \$107,000 and the cost of medical insurance for employees is expected to increase by nearly \$800,000 .

If everything goes according to plan, revenues and expenditures are expected to keep pace with each other.

But things rarely go according to plan, as Dick found out last year.

Last summer county officials were flush with excitement, after learning they were going to receive several million dollars in unexpected property tax revenues, due to additional money produced by the new state-approved property tax collection schedule.

Then gloom returned last December, when officials learned that keeping up with future retirement benefits was going to cost millions more than expected.

They also learned they could fall victim to the state's budget battle, which threatened to cut off millions of dollars of much-needed revenue from Lansing.

After imposing a hiring freeze, cutting a key employee benefit and maintaining their money stream from Lansing, the county again appears to be on sound financial footing.

But the storm clouds again are looming in the distance.

State officials are having trouble eliminating a potential deficit from their 2008 budget plan, and the county could end up paying the price, Dick said.

Possible cuts from Lansing include a 50 percent decrease in alcohol tax revenue, which could cost the general fund about \$450,000 over the next year. The state also has threatened to privative the foster care system for troubled kids, something that would cost the county an estimated extra \$754,000 in lost state revenue.

"There could be a significant impact on the budget, depending on what the state ends up doing," Dick said.

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Article published Aug 28, 2007

Poverty slides significantly for first time since 2000

STEPHEN OHLEMACHER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The nation's poverty rate dropped last year, the first significant decline since President Bush took office.

The Census Bureau reported today that 36.5 million Americans, or 12.3 percent — were living in poverty last year. That's down from 12.6 percent in 2005.

The median household income was \$48,200, a slight increase from the previous year. But the number of people without health insurance also increased, to 47 million.

The last significant decline in the poverty rate came in 2000, during the Clinton administration. In 2005, the poverty rate dipped from 12.7 percent to 12.6 percent, but Census officials said that change was statistically insignificant.

The poverty numbers are good economic news at a time when financial markets have been rattled by a slumping housing market. However, the numbers released today represent economic conditions from a year ago.

The poverty level is the official measure used to decide eligibility for federal health, housing, nutrition and child care benefits. It differs by family size and makeup. For a family of four with two children, for example, the poverty level is \$20,444. The poverty rate — the percentage of people living below poverty — helps shape the debate on the health of the nation's economy.

The figures were released at a news conference by David Johnson, chief of the Census Bureau's Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division.

The poverty report comes five years into an uneven economic recovery, and well into a presidential campaign that still has 14 months to go.

Poverty has not been a big issue in the campaign, and political scientists said they doubted the new numbers would change that.

"The poor are politically mute," said Larry Jacobs, a political scientist at the University of Minnesota. "What rational politician would listen to the poor? They don't vote, they don't write checks, why care?"

Democrat John Edwards has made fighting poverty a centerpiece of his campaign. But, Jacobs noted, "He's struggling to raise money and he's lagging in the polls."

Evelyn Brodtkin, a political scientist at the University of Chicago, said she expects the rising number of people without insurance to get more attention in the campaign.

The share of Americans without health insurance hit 15.8 percent last year, up from 15.3 percent the previous year.

"It affects people in the middle, and it affects corporations," Brodtkin said. "Especially those who compete globally, they are really hurting because they have to compete with companies that don't have huge health insurance bills for their labor force."

Lyndon Johnson was the last president to launch a major initiative aimed at eradicating poverty, said Sheldon Danziger, co-director of the National Poverty Center at the University of Michigan.

Danziger said low unemployment in 2006 helped lower the poverty rate. But, he noted, the rate was slow to drop despite five years of economic growth.

"For three decades we have had an economy where workers with a high school diploma or less have hardly kept up with inflation," Danziger said.

Low-wage workers have been hurt by the nation's declining manufacturing sector, which has lost more than 3 million jobs since Bush took office.



Church gives backpacks full of school supplies to 200 needy schoolchildren

Tuesday, August 28, 2007

By Tarryl Jackson

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"Thank God!" was Lorraine Montgomery's reaction when she learned she could get free backpacks and school supplies for her children this year.

"It's been a rough year for me," Montgomery said Monday afternoon as she and her three daughters left with their new backpacks.

About 200 backpacks filled with school supplies were given out to area families at Mount Hope Dayspring Church, 206 W. Prospect St.

"We're amazed at how big the need is," said the Rev. Bruce Van Hal. "Our plan for next year is to step it up even more."

About 80 percent of the backpacks were distributed in the first hour.

The church also has a waiting list of about 70 families. Those who did not get a backpack Monday could still get their hands on some free school supplies.

This is the first time the church has organized a project like this.

Last year, a couple from the church brought in 10 backpacks to give to needy children.

"It just sparked the idea," said Kim Stairs, the project's coordinator.

Word spread to the public in early August, and many local businesses, nonprofit organizations and community members donated items.

"We can do 400 (backpacks) next year," Van Hal said. "That would be a good goal."

Montgomery's daughter, Destinee, who will be a sixth-grader at East Jackson Middle School, was happy with her backpack.

"I like how big it is and the colors," she said.

Jackson resident Heather Marshall, whose two children will attend Hunt Elementary School this year, was grateful.

"I needed the help right now," she said.

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KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Generosity gleams at back-to-school giveaway event

Tuesday, August 28, 2007

By Jef Rietsma

Special to the Gazette

THREE RIVERS -- More than 500 children gathered for St. Joseph County's fourth annual Back To School Festival on Saturday.

The event was hailed by organizers as underscoring the good that can come out of various groups working together.

"This is a collaboration of many, many groups, organizations and individuals coming together in a way that you don't see too often in St. Joseph County or pretty much anywhere," said Brenda McGowan, a Three Rivers resident and key organizer of the event, held at Three Rivers Middle School.

Distributed were 650 backpacks filled with school supplies -- pencils, erasers, folders, notebook paper, markers, rulers, colored pencils and other materials relevant to various grade levels.

The backpacks were distributed at no cost, thanks to a group of solicitors and donations from several area businesses. Wal-Mart contributed 100 supply-filled backpacks, and Menard's offered backpacks for sale at a reduced rate for the event, McGowan said.

Contributing to a carnival-like atmosphere was the availability of free hamburgers, hot dogs, fruit-flavored ice cones, cotton candy and popcorn as a disc jockey provided music. Also, door prizes provided by local merchants were given away.

McGowan said the day of charitable gestures was inspirational and should make Three Rivers residents proud.

"There were a lot, and I mean a whole lot, of people who worked collaboratively to put this together," she said. "And it wouldn't be possible without a business community that recognizes the value of its children. It's a very generous, caring and supportive community that we have in Three Rivers."

McGowan said Three Rivers Community Schools, the George Washington Carver Center and the St. Joseph County NAACP also played critical roles in the four-hour event.

Karen Slawinski, a Sturgis resident and grandmother of two backpack recipients, said she read about the event in her local paper the day before and decided it was worth checking out.

Slawinski, who has a grandson entering kindergarten at Wall Elementary School in Sturgis and another going into preschool, said she was skeptical, expecting something would be required for receiving the goods.

"My daughter couldn't be here today, so my husband said this looks like something we should check into," Slawinski said. "Money is tight for all of us, and to come here and be welcomed in this manner -- to say I'm impressed would be an understatement."

Rules of the giveaway required every recipient of a backpack to be with an adult. The recipients' hands were stamped to ensure no one received more than one backpack.

McGowan said the event originated from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People encouraging local chapters to stage back-to-school events where backpacks filled with school supplies

would be distributed.

The county's inaugural Back To School Festival took place in 2004, when Liz O'Dell was president of the St. Joseph County NAACP chapter. It drew 125 people, McGowan said.

Last year the amount of materials and money donated reached an all-time high, she said, and 550 people attended.

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News Headlines from PR Newswire

J. Paul Austin Selected as the 2007 Distinguished Leadership Award Recipient

LANSING, Mich., Aug. 27 /PRNewswire/ -- Leadership Michigan, a program of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, is pleased to announce its 2007 Distinguished Leadership Award recipient, J. Paul Austin. He will be honored at the Annual Leadership Dinner on October 25, 2007 at the Air Zoo in Kalamazoo.

The Michigan Chamber Foundation's Leadership Michigan program established the Distinguished Leadership Award in 2005 to honor individuals who have demonstrated excellence in leadership and exemplify the goals and aspirations of Leadership Michigan. Leadership Michigan has graduated over 400 professionals since its start in 1988. Jim Epolito received the inaugural award in 2005 and Patrick L. Anderson received it in 2006.

Austin was selected because of his exceptional leadership qualities; his achievement in both professional and civic activities; his ability to create and articulate a vision and effect change; and his significant contribution to the development of future leaders. He is a graduate of the Leadership Michigan class of 1992.

"Paul is a rare man who checks his ego at the door," said Kathy Elston and Ron Wood, who nominated Austin for this award. "He is a greatly respected man who inspires loyalty." Adds Marianne Udow, who supported Austin's nomination, "Paul is an engaged and inspiring leader who is both a role model with regard to leadership attributes and an advocate for good leadership among others." Karl Albrecht also supported Austin's nomination and said that "he leads with a sincere honesty and a human touch. To me that makes him a distinguished leader."

Austin has distinguished himself at both the professional and personal level. He has been a Senior Vice President for 12 years at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan directing more than 2,500 employees for eight years and now serving as the company's Chief Actuarial Officer. Under his leadership, the corporation has met its financial, membership, and customer satisfaction goals. "Paul builds respectful relationships and is highly engaged with people and the business, both internally and externally," said Elston and Wood. In addition, Austin has been involved in political campaigns and contributes to many candidates. He has led both the corporate United Way and American Heart Walk campaigns and donates generously, both with his time and money, to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen and Habitat for Humanity. "Paul's passion for his professional and civic activities is driven by the philosophy of doing the right things right every day," said Elston and Wood. "It is a motto he lives by through his actions." Paul and his wife Ann have five children and seven grandchildren.

"We are very pleased to recognize Mr. Austin's outstanding achievement in leadership and to provide one more example of what excellence in leadership means," said Aimee Bahs, Director of the Leadership Michigan program. "Mr. Austin is obviously a man of principle, who leads with honesty and integrity. His efforts have positively impacted a number of individuals, organizations and causes across Michigan. We are delighted to be able to identify such a leader and provide him with the recognition he deserves."

The crystal award will be presented to Austin at the Annual Leadership Dinner on Thursday, October 25, 2007 at the Air Zoo in Kalamazoo from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Melanie Bergeron, CEO of Two Men And A Truck is the keynote speaker. Please visit <http://www.michamber.com> and click on Leadership Michigan for details on the Annual Leadership Dinner and to register.



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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

MARIANNE UDOW
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News Release

Contact: Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

**Michigan Department of Human Services Summarily Suspends
the Family Day Care Home Certificate of Registration, License Number DF630288260, of
Rachel Zonsius**

August 27, 2007

The Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Children and Adult Licensing (OCAL) issued an order of summary suspension and amended notice of intent to revoke the certificate of registration of Oakland County family day care home provider Rachel Zonsius, 1426 East Elza, Hazel Park, Michigan. This action resulted from a recent investigation of a complaint of the child day care family home.

The August 23, 2007 complaint investigation found violations of the Child Care Organizations Act and administrative rules regarding caregiver and child care home family; supervision; and caregiver responsibilities. OCAL took emergency action to protect the health, welfare, and safety of children.

Effective 6:00 p.m., August 24, 2007, the Summary Suspension Order prohibits Rachel Zonsius from operating a family day care home at 1426 East Elza, Hazel Park, Michigan or at any other address or location. Accordingly, she may not accept children for care after that date and time. The order also requires Ms. Zonsius to inform all of the parents of children in her care that her certificate of registration has been suspended and that she can no longer provide day care.

Ms. Zonsius has held a certificate of registration to operate a family day care home since February 6, 2007. The certificate of registration was for six children.

Michigan law defines a day care family home "as a private home in which 1 but fewer than 7 minor children are received for care and supervision for periods of less than 24 hours a day, unattended by a parent or legal guardian, except children related to an adult member of the family by blood, marriage, or adoption."

For more information, consult DHS Web site at www.michigan.gov/dhs.